GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:769
ANSWERED ON:03.03.2008
MOBILE NETWORK AT INTERNATIONAL BORDER
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of the intelligence report regarding the potential danger of mobile network spreading along the international border of the country;

(b) if so, whether the Government has taken any steps to remove these mobile towers posing threat to the security of the country;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government has formulated any regulations for private telecom service providers in view of the catching of telecom signals across the border by mobile towers located along border areas;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) whether the Government has any plan to boost the telephone/mobile services in North-East region especially in Assam;

(g) if so, the details thereof; and

(h) the details of tele-density in the North-East Region, area-wise?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD)

(a) to (e) As per earlier conditions of Cellular Mobile Telephone Service licensee, provision of mobile service within 10 Km. Of the international border and as per Unified Access Services licensee, setting up of Base Trans-receive Station (BTS) within 10 Km. of the international border required clearance from the Government due to security reasons.

In consideration of the public demand of mobile services from border areas, the above condition of license agreements has been relaxed incorporating following conditions w.e.f. 26th February, 2007:

(i) There shall be a `No Service Zone` of 500 Meters width along with International border within Indian Territory for wireless/mobile service, where the licensee(s) are not permitted to provide wireless/mobile service.

(ii) The Licensee shall create a `Buffer Zone` of 10 Kms width along the Line Of Control (LOC), Line of Actual Control (LAC) and International Border between Akhnoor area in J&K and Pathankot area, as applicable, wherein they shall not deploy their Cell site(s)/BTS(s)/Radio Transmitter(s) for provision of mobile.

With the introduction of the above conditions, it is now possible to provide mobile services in most of the cities/towns in the country which are located more than 500 meters away from the international border. However, specific permission has also been granted in Agartala (Tripura) and Karimganj (Assam) for provision of mobile service though these towns are within 500 meters of international border.

(f) & (g) Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited has made a plan to increase the Mobile Network with 11.6 lakhs lines including 7 lakh line in Assam state under the current Mobile network expansion project and to increase the Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) network with 0.857 lakh lines including 0.6625 lakh line in Assam state under the current WLL network expansion project to boost the telephone/mobile services in the North-East Region. Similarly private operators have also made plans to expand their services in their respective licensed service areas in North-Eastern region. Bharti Airtel Ltd. has plans to install 1050 mobile tower sites in Assam apart from laying OFC (Optical Fiber Cable) connecting all state of North East and important towns in Assam.

Bharti Hexacom Ltd. has plans to install more than 450 new mobile tower sites to cover North East service area.Reliance Telecom Ltd. Has plans to cover 617 towns/villages in North Eastern Region including 320 towns/villages of Assam with mobile services. Vodafone Essar Spacetel Ltd. Is also in the process of rolling out their network in North Eastern region.

(h) Area-wise tele-density in the North-East Region is given in the Annexure.